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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

351st meeting

Tuesday, 21 April 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chair: Before the Disarmament Commission moves to hear from delegations, I would like to draw the attention of representatives to the schedule of meetings as set out in document A/CN.10/2015/CRP.1/Rev.2, which was posted on the QuickFirst website on 17 April, as delegations were duly informed. The schedule was revised to include the plenary meeting that we are holding now.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the schedule of meetings as contained in document A/CN.10/2015/CRP.1/Rev.2?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I would now like to inform the Commission why the Bureau decided to convene today's meeting, as we move closer to the concluding phase of our work at this substantive session.

The Bureau felt that a short plenary meeting was needed to inform the plenary of the progress made, or not made, in the two Working Groups and in the consultations on other issues, mainly on the issue of a third agenda item. Members may recall that no decision was made on the issue of the third agenda item. The consultations that the Chair and the Bureau held on the issue point to the fact that no great progress has been made, although the vast majority of delegations do not object in principle to having a third agenda item. Where we are still stuck is what subject to discuss — that is, what subject to allocate to the third agenda item. Consultations are ongoing. We are at the beginning of a cycle and have almost reached the end of the 2015 substantive session. Consultations will continue with the friends of the Bureau. That is the state of play concerning the issue of the third agenda item of the Disarmament Commission.

I now give the floor to the Chair of Working Group II.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco), Chair of Working Group II: I should like briefly to inform representatives of what has happened up to now. We will have the opportunity to formally report to the Commission at the next plenary meeting.

Working Group II started its deliberations based on the Chair's paper from last year's substantive session A/CN.10/2014/CRP.3, dated 23 April 2014. We held several discussions and an informal paper was circulated, including some amendments and modifications. Proposals by some delegations were also circulated by e-mail to all members and copies were made available in the room.

As we all heard during the general debate and during the informal consultations that preceded it, the initial assessment was that progress had been achieved previously in Working Group II. For several delegations, there was even a possibility of reaching consensus, which we were very close to achieving. But issues remained outstanding. We started working on them. Apparently, there are some substantive difficulties with some issues and with the paper as a whole. Several delegations indicated that the paper we are working on may require very substantive revision.

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It was especially underscored that the paper lacked concrete confidence-building measures.

We benefitted from a presentation by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, which provided grounds for good discussions among the members of the Group. Following those discussions, we agreed that we needed some substantive revisions to the paper. That is what I did as Chair, based on input that I had received from delegations since the beginning of this session, as well as other proposals I made as a compromise, or as solutions or alternatives, to some controversial issues in the paper. That paper was circulated this morning by e-mail. It will be available and distributed to the members of the Group and we will start considering it this morning in Working Group II. With the agreement of the Group, we will later consider reactions and comments, and continue to do so in the afternoon. Those are my intentions for today, but I will see what the Working Group decides when it begins its meeting this morning following this plenary.

We have only two meetings for the Working Group today. The third meeting, to be held tomorrow afternoon, will be devoted to agreeing on the report of the Working Group to the plenary. We do not have much time left. I hope we will start with discussions on the basis of the new paper, which could provide a sound basis for further work by Member States of the Commission.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Chair of Working Group I.

Mr. Tilegen (Kazakhstan): First of all, I would like to apologize for the absence of my Ambassador. He has prior commitments and he is working with his delegation. I would like to present a brief report on Working Group I.

So far, we have held eight meetings and prepared two non-papers of the Chair, with revisions. The third revision will be issued this afternoon, and be briefly reviewed at tomorrow's meeting. We have divided our paper into three sections: introduction, principles and approaches. We have thus far covered the first two sections. There was agreement, but also some areas in which there were real differences. We hope that they will be ironed out. Several editorial changes were submitted by delegations. We have tried to give them full consideration and find a middle way as a compromise. We are trying to generate ideas and prepare documents that will be agreeable to all the delegations.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.